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EDITORIAL

The present number of the BULLETIN inaugurates a new departure in museum literature. For two years this modest sheet has appeared at regular intervals of three months as the official organ of the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, the purpose of which, as announced in its first number, was to bring the members of the corporation into closer touch with the work of the Museum and to keep them advised of its development and progress.

We believe that the educational influence of the art museum can be extended beyond the restricted circle of its local clientele by the publication of a more pretentious periodical which shall be devoted to subjects relating to the collections exhibited in the Museum, prepared by experts and recognized authorities in their respective departments. Beginning with this issue the literary feature of the BULLETIN will be given greater prominence by the introduction of a series of illustrated papers, of a popular nature, contributed by the Honorary Curators of the Museum staff and other specialists whose interest has been enlisted in this work.

THE EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE OF THE ART MUSEUM

A widespread belief seems to prevail among the frequenters of public museums that the principal object of these institutions is to provide a mild form of entertainment for those who desire an hour's recreation. Comparatively few visitors enter a museum with a higher purpose than to obtain temporary amusement, and consequently few carry away lasting impressions of what they have seen. This idea has been largely fostered in the past by the managers themselves. The various exhibits, once arranged, have remained in the same dusty cases for years without improvement in classification. New objects may be added from time to time, but they are often displayed in such a manner that they do not increase the educational value of the collections. This condition of affairs is a survival of the era of two-headed calves and sections of hempen rope used in the execution of noted criminals. The increasing culture of the people now demands a more intelligent administration of the art museum, and the question arises how shall its educational influence be extended to reach beyond the local community in which it is situated. There are various ways by which this can be effected:

1st. By the classification, arrangement and labeling of the exhibits in such a manner as to convey definite meaning to those in search of knowledge.

2d. By providing facilities for the instruction not only of visitors, but of those living at a distance who have not the opportunity of inspecting and studying the collections, by the publication of suitable monographs, catalogues, textbooks and periodicals which shall furnish, in a compact form, all necessary information on the various subjects treated.

3d. By arousing the interest of the children of the schools through the offer of prizes for the best essays on subjects relating to the museum collections.

4th. By popular public lectures delivered by specialists on art subjects.

5th. By the holding of special exhibitions from time to time, of objects illustrating the progress of the various arts.

6th. By introducing good music into the museum, whose elevating influence shall prove a powerful factor in the popularizing of good art among the people. This latter innovation will probably meet with opposition at first, but the time will surely come when every progressive art museum will provide suitable music as one of the attractions, for is not music itself the art of beauty and expression, and the key to the fullest appreciation of the other arts, fine and industrial?



NOTES

A small but choice loan collection of Phoenician glass has been received from Mrs. Samuel H. Austin, consisting of bowls, bottles, small vases and bracelets. These pieces belong to the period of about 1500 B. C. Many of them are exquisitely patinated, the iridescent colorings being unusually brilliant and variegated. Two deep bowls or jars, in particular, attract attention, one with opalescent effects, changing from the flashing red of living fire to the cymophanous glow of a golden sunset, blending into tints of blue and green; the other, covered with prismatic shades of blue, ranging from the dark sheen of peacock plumes to the pale satiny lustre of madreperle. Several ewer-shaped vases possess the coloring and surface texture of dark agate, an exceedingly rare effect in glass of this character.

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The valuable collection of arms and armor belonging to Mr. Samuel H. Austin has been placed on exhibition in the Museum. Some of the gems of this collection are described elsewhere in this number of the BULLETIN.

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An illustrated Handbook on the GREAT SEALS OF ENGLAND AND SOME OTHERS, by Prof. Charles E. Dana, based on the Museum collection, has just been issued and will be sent free to all members who may desire it. To others, the book will be furnished at 25 cents a copy. The pamphlet consists of 54 pages, illustrated by eight full-page plates and a handsome cover design.